

Domestic
Relocation
Allowances

B2

Friday, November 17, 1983

THE WASHINGTON POST

MIKE CAUSEY

Photo

THE FEDERAL DIARY**More Liberal Benefits for a Moving Experience**

Beginning this week, Federal agents, managers, auditors and secretaries transferred to other cities can take along an extra 7,000 pounds of household goods.

Thanks to legislation signed by the president Monday, the approximately 28,000 feds who pull up stakes each year on orders from their agencies will also be able to get special tax reimbursement for moving expenses. In some cases their agencies may contract with a real estate firm to sell their houses for them.

The legislation upgrading federal moving expenses was written by Sen. John Warner (D-Va.) and Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.). They had a lot of legislation-moving help from Reps. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) and Vic Fazio (D-Calif.), who also have a lot of U.S. worker constituents.

The new moving regulations increase from 11,000 to 18,000 pounds the amount of household goods Uncle Sam will pay to move. It also doubles—to 60 days—the amount of time employees may be reimbursed for hardship expenses associated with moves, and raises the amounts the government will pay for expenses incurred in buying a new home (to \$7,500) and in selling an old home (to \$15,000).

Moving is a way of life for many employees in law enforcement work, and at agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service, Defense and others with rotation policies or big field operations. According to testimony presented to Congress when the bill was being considered, the average federal worker (prior to the new law) was spending between \$8,000 and \$9,000 for unreimbursed expenses when moving for the government.

The improvements will still leave the government behind what many private firms pay when they move employees. But it is a giant step forward, particularly from this Congress and this administration, neither of which have gone out of their way to do anything, particularly nice for U.S. workers.